

- Hall: The federal government should foot the bill, not local taxpayers -

Goshen, NY – U.S. Representative John Hall (D-NY19) joined with Orange County Sheriff Carl DuBois today at the Orange County Sheriff's office to announce that the House of Representatives has voted to save a program that reimburses local government for costs associated with keeping illegal immigrants accused of crimes in jail. Orange County received more than \$250,000 last year from the program, which the Bush Administration tried to eliminate from next year's Federal budget.

"Illegal immigration is a federal issue, not a state issue," said Hall. "The federal government should be paying the costs associated with detaining illegal immigrants instead of transferring the financial burden to local taxpayers."

The State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) provides federal payments to reimburse states and localities for costs incurred incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens. In New York, reimbursement under the program has been 24% of the costs associated with these detentions. Orange County is in the top 20 percent of municipalities in the U.S. in terms of the amount of money it receives annually from the program. Other Hudson Valley counties also benefit from the program.

"It is imperative that the present SCAAP funding levels be kept or increased, due to the various unfunded mandates county governments have been absorbing and passing on to our taxpayers," said Orange County Sheriff Carl DuBouis. "This funding is essential to offset any additional tax burden to our residents."

SCAAP funding comes as a reimbursement, instead of according to a formula based on population or other factors. States and localities receive funding based on the costs they incur incarcerating illegal aliens.

Last year the State of New York received over \$24 million under SCAAP, the second largest level among states. Counties in Hall's 19th Congressional District received the following amounts from SCAAP last year:

- Westchester County - \$541,407
- Orange County - \$256,519
- Putnam County - \$5,873
- Rockland County - \$182,436
- Dutchess County - \$37,346 (fiscal year 2005 funding)

President Bush proposed cutting the SCAAP program from \$405 million in fiscal year 2007 to \$4 million in fiscal year 2008. After President Bush tried to virtually eliminate the program, Hall wrote on June 22nd to House Appropriations Committee Chairman Dave Obey, calling for full funding of the program.

Despite Hall's request, the House Appropriations Committee funded SCAAP at only \$350 million. Last week Hall supported an amendment on the House floor to divert funding from other areas in order to increase SCAAP funding by \$55 million, protecting the total amount of

funding available to states and localities. This legislation passed the House last week and is now awaiting action from the Senate.

“Under President Bush’s proposal, the federal government would stop or reduce the reimbursements to localities like Orange County for their work detaining illegal immigrants, forcing taxpayers to pay for the costs through local taxes” said Hall. “The federal government should foot the bill, not local taxpayers.”

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